

It has been half a year since that hellish day in September which brought to our doorsteps the murderous anger of those who hate what the US values and represents. In the brief span of tens of minutes, our sense of our place and role in the world -- how we define ourselves personally, politically, and professionally -- changed profoundly.

As physicists in the US, we have proudly characterized ourselves as working in a borderless world of free inquiry, inviting colleagues from all lands to join in this humanizing avocation, and using this fellowship of the mind as a means for greater sharing and understanding among all peoples. Yet at the same time, our science has been sustained by an imperative from our leaders to enhance the safety of our country through the application of knowledge to national security, be it military or economic. Many physicists are keenly attuned to this balancing act in which we navigate between openness without bounds and patriotic duty. Recently, our leaders -- our neighbors, our mail carriers(!) -- have renewed the national security imperative. The war on terrorism is being fought on several fronts, but the message has been delivered that this war will be waged not only with guns, but also technology. At home, as we work to protect ourselves from threats known and unknown, we have seen a remarkable deployment of physics-based technologies by law enforcement, airports, and postal distribution centers. Clearly, physicists who are so inclined will have the opportunity to align their professional objectives with the call to serve, by applying their skills to the national defense. Yet we all should continue to strive to maintain the balance that humanizes our profession, works toward peace, and shapes our world into an open and livable place.

It is in this context that I conclude with much pride my year as Chair of the Forum, for we have made progress in strengthening the influence of the Forum as a locus for connecting physics and physicists to the society we serve. Specifically, we have strengthened our position within the APS through the APS Council's approval of a designated FPS seat on the APS Panel on Public Affairs. The person filling this position will be elected by the Forum membership, thus providing a grass-roots FPS voice on POPA as it advises APS on a broad range of important issues at the intersection of physics and policy.

The Forum also continues to educate and shape the policy debate through our highly-acclaimed newsletter, *Physics and Society*. P&S is a unique venue for physicists to publish their analysis on a range of issues in a manner that is scholarly, accessible, and broadly disseminated. Recognizing the importance and potential of P&S, the Forum Executive Committee continues a vigorous discussion on the proper balance between paper and electronic publication. We have also been working with APS to broaden access to P&S through more visible placement of links to P&S from the APS web site. Given the scholarly nature and outward perspective of P&S, we feel strongly that access to and visibility of P&S should and will improve in the coming months. Success should also provide some relief from our concerns about the negative impact of the transition to 50% electronic publication. I am happy to report that the APS leadership has strongly supported our efforts and is working with us on a solution.

We have also made progress in connecting the interests and activities of FPS to those of other APS units, primarily the Forum on Education, the Forum on Industrial and Applied Physics, and the new Forum on Graduate Student Affairs. We have done this mainly through co-sponsorship of invited sessions at the APS March and April Meetings. These

sessions, along with our newsletter, are at the heart of our intellectual contribution to the APS, and we continuously strive to sponsor or co-sponsor interesting and timely symposia.

As Program Chair and Chair of the Executive Committee, I encouraged different perspectives on invited symposia. My favorite was “Physics in Seattle/The Seattle in Physics,” where we invited speakers to demonstrate the importance of physics to the Pacific Northwest (volcanoes and earthquakes, and the physics of foam – think cappuccino) or discussed how the region influences what physicists do (work at Microsoft or Boeing). This slightly whimsical session attracted great speakers, good audience, and some good coverage in the press, and it illustrated the broad influence of physicists at work.

When I ran for Chair-elect two years ago, I expressed concern for the health of physics. My concern was not so much for our intellectual health, for if the programs of the March and April Meetings and the various unit meetings are any indication, physics remains a vital and nimble source of knowledge and insight with an ever-expanding sphere of application. My concern is more for the health of our field as an institution, particularly on campus. Specifically, I am deeply troubled by the precipitous fall off in undergraduate physics majors and what this portends for the future of the profession. In my opinion, the exodus of students is symptomatic of a growing perception that there is a gap between 1) physics education and applicability, 2) the expectations and goals of students, and 3) the needs of society, employers included. I took office with a goal to help change this perception. My focus has been on physics departments who, as the main social unit of the physics community, have the power to tackle this perception problem directly at its source. I have argued that physics departments need to re-enlighten students, parents, employers, and policy makers about the societal necessity of physics and physicists; and I have urged that departments need to enlighten and persuade by example and outreach.

In the post-September 11 world, we have the opportunity to strengthen our message to students and society at large in more profound ways. Our field provides us with the intellectual tools and international colleagues to work for peace and security through applications of knowledge and human outreach. The Forum has an important role to play as we enter this next year. Many issues beyond terrorism are also on the table, and these require the careful analysis of physicists: climate change, arms control, missile defense, and energy production and conservation, to name just a few. Through P&S, symposia, outreach, and now POPA, we have many instruments at hand to influence the spectrum of policy debates.

It has been a true honor to serve APS and the Forum. I will value this next year as past-Chair, for I will have the privilege of working with your new Chair, Laurie Fathe, and her future successors, Andy Sessler and your newly-elected Vice-Chair, Michael Rosenthal. I thank you for this opportunity.